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Profile

a guide to military lifestyles



Marine Corps
Embassy Guards

Plus:

Rugged
Rangers,
PollutionBusters,
Aerial Acrobats
and more.

The Ambassadors' Own

F.Y.I.

For Your Information

This month's PROFILE is our last issue for the school year. Since November we have covered a lot of stories and careers ranging from SEALs, a helicopter competition, the service academies and embassy guards (this issue) to cooks at sea. We tried some different approaches to our articles, and we got plenty of new ideas from your letters and responses to our survey and will continue to give you the kind of magazine you've been asking for.

In case you missed an issue or are looking for some particular information, P.S. contains an index of all PROFILEs from November 1989 to this month. Back issues are available (while they last) and are yours for the asking.

Oops

January's Basic Facts issue, page 15, under Army College Fund, should read: The Army College Fund provides an additional incentive of up to \$400 per month . . . a young man or woman enlisting for a two-year tour can earn up to \$17,000 to use for their education for a \$1,200 investment . . . for four years, the amount earned can range up to \$25,200 . . .

January's Basic Facts issue, page 9, under Quarters Allowance with Dependents, the correct entitlement for E-3s is \$296.

March's Academies issue, page 22, the toll-

free number given for the Naval Academy has been so swamped with calls it's difficult to get through. The Navy suggests calling (301) 267-4361.

Feedback

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE PROFILE CHANGE . . .

- *"to exclude sex-discriminatory jobs (i.e., women not eligible) or label them 'for men only'."*

- *"to talk about women's jobs and lifestyles in the military."*

PROFILE WOULD BE MORE USEFUL IF . . .

- *"an annual index of MOSs covered was issued for the past year and the two previous years."*

- *"it had less humor, etc. departments and concentrated more on serious views into the Armed Forces."*

PROFILE provides information on military occupational specialties (MOSs) in accordance with current DOD policies. The fact that some jobs are currently "closed" to women is not meant to reflect discrimination, but rather to abide by current prohibitions concerning assignment of women into direct combat roles.

PROFILE's April issue is the last issue of each publishing year and it does include an index of that year's stories.

Life in the military — as life everywhere — has both a somber and a humorous side. PROFILE's aim is to inform *and* entertain . . . we leave it to you to let us know if we're on target.

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The American Embassy

The Marine Corps training school for world-wide duty.

By Specialist Paul White

A smile eases across Corporal Russell Cartwright's face as he looks over his wall locker display at the Marine Security Guard School, Quantico, Va. And why not? Felix Unger would have trouble finding fault with this arrangement.

Each hanger, evenly spaced from the rest, holds a Marine Corps uniform which appears to have never been worn. Even the most stubborn wrinkles have been pressed into submission. The creases appear sharp enough to draw blood. On the top shelf, Cartwright's T-shirts and undershorts lay folded into squares not much bigger than a folded handkerchief, all the same size and stacked neatly into position. The whole set-up looks too precise to have been done by human hands.

Cartwright pauses to admire his handiwork. Good? Sure. Good enough? Well . . . , maybe those creases could be a tad sharper. And perhaps the T-shirts could be folded a little more crisply. Is that a string hanging from that uniform?

The smile disappears, replaced by an expression of determination. "I've got a lot of work to do," he said.

Cartwright, like many of his fellow classmates, yearns for the challenge, excitement and prestige of being on embassy duty. He's heard the stories embassy Marines tell about their experiences in faraway lands. He knows what the Marines are looking for, people with "the tact of a diplomat and the skills and tactics of a warrior." And he believes he's the right man for the job.

He also knows, however, that



A riot? No, embassy guard students practicing self-defense with side-handle

before he gets to assume an internal security role at an American embassy, he needs to pass muster at the "American Embassy Quantico." As Frank Sinatra might put it, if he can make it there, he'll make it anywhere.

On the surface, the school doesn't seem all that tough. It lasts just six weeks, a little more than half the time recruits spend in basic training. Physical training, a Marine Corps staple, doesn't dominate the agenda. Field duty doesn't occur at all.

Furthermore, the booming, ever-present voices of drill instructors contrast sharply with the relatively measured tones of teachers in a classroom. Compared to recruit training, this school seems downright quiet.

Yet this apparent outward calm belies the school's full-court press of a curriculum, which results in the type of pressure boot camp only hints at. "The expectations are so much higher, because they figure we should already know better," said Lance Corporal Mark

ssy Quantico



SSgt. Karl L. Petersen

tons.

Matney. Have trouble budgeting your time? Can't get instructions right the first time? Need someone to motivate you into getting your work done? Anyone who answers these questions in the affirmative need not apply.

Marines from all military job specialties may attend the school, but even military policemen like Cartwright and Matney, who already know a thing or two about security, struggle to deal with what it takes to become an embassy guard. "This is the hardest thing

I've ever done," said Matney, two weeks into the school.

Marshall Hall doesn't look much different than many of the other buildings at the Marine Corps Combat Development Command on the outside. Inside, however, it has the look and feel of an American embassy. Students stand guard at Post 1, a bulletproof-glass-encased security nerve center at the building's entrance. A react room, not far from Post 1, contains the battle

continued next page

Embassy Guards

The mission — to safeguard classified material and protect American lives and property at American embassies and consulates abroad.

The assignments — detachments ranging in size from five to 35 Marines at 139 locations. Each guard serves two tours. Most tours last 15 months. Those assignments in "designated" countries (Soviet-bloc) last no longer than 12 months.

While attending the Marine Security Guard School, each student lists five preferred assignments. Subject to "the needs of the Marine Corps," they usually get duty in one of their five selections, according to Sergeant Major Clyde Cropper of the Marine Corps Security Guard Battalion.

The qualifications — Applicants must be male or female lance corporals (E-3) or higher, volunteers, and U.S. citizens. They must also meet Marine Corps standards for personal appearance and have successfully passed their most recent physical fitness test. Additionally, candidates must be unmarried and agree to remain unmarried until completion of their tours of duty.

The benefits — a "real world tangible mission." Embassy guards qualify for special duty pay and in some cases imminent danger pay. They also enhance their promotion opportunities. And for those who enjoy traveling, the program is ideal. How else would one get to work in Canberra, Australia?

The challenges — At times, the work can be extremely dangerous. Furthermore, some of the less desirable assignments can tax the morale of even the most upbeat Marine.

In general, however, the guards "find things at each post that make it unique and special to them," Cropper added.

QUANTICO

from previous page

gear the students/guards would need in an emergency. The students even answer the phone with "American Embassy Quantico. . ."

Each class is divided into detachments. The "commanders" of these detachments are actually staff, gunnery, master or master gunnery sergeants training to be detachment commanders at American embassies.

Instructor/advisors, hand-picked from among the top detachment commanders throughout the world, conduct classes during the days. Representatives from the State Department, the FBI, and the Naval Investigative Service assist in schooling the students.

The classes range from learning which fork to use for the salad at a formal dinner to how to thwart a terrorist threat. In between, the instructors emphasize the particulars of the students' primary job — preventing unauthorized access to an embassy and its classified material. Two tests chart the students' mastery of the various subjects. Students scoring less than 80 percent fail.

The students must also qualify with their standard weapon, the .357 Magnum revolver, as well as the 12-gauge shotgun. Additional instruction comes in handcuff techniques, the side-handle baton, terrorist weapons and reaction to emergency situations.

Since embassy duty also entails mingling with dignitaries, the students take classes in etiquette and how to handle themselves at social functions. One Marine remembered how his parents reacted to seeing his old "eat first, worry about manners later" meal habits replaced by a kinder, gentler table ritual. "It blew my mother's mind," he said.

Although much of a student's day is spent in a classroom, the



SSgt. Karl L. Petersen

A State Department instructor teaches the fine art of handcuffing.

instructors use demonstrations and role-playing devices to spice up the classes and drive home their points. During a class on protecting the detachment's quarters, for example, one of the instructors disguised himself as a terrorist and busted in on the class, firing blank rounds and abducting one of the students. (At least that was the plan. The student, in true Marine fashion, tackled his would-be assailant and got the best of a 30-second wrestling match before his instructor broke up the action. "I thought he was going to come quietly," said the stunned terrorist/instructor.)

After classes, the detachment commanders lead their detachments through additional training.

From there, the students are on their own. Technically, they could

go out on the town. Realistically? Fat chance. Assembling an inspection-ready wall locker takes days. Students can spend more than an hour working on just one uniform. And then there's seemingly endless hours of studying to stay caught up. Go out on the town? There's often barely enough time for a few hours of sleep.

"You have to know when to sleep and when to burn the midnight oil," Matney said. Stated Gunnery Sergeant Mark Shelp, an instructor: "This school's not designed for free time."

The frantic pace is maintained throughout the six weeks. "In reality, we probably need twice as much time to teach them the information we have," said Gunnery Sergeant Robert Massie, an instructor/advisor.

Tour of Duty

Even when it's a hardship, embassy guards still eat it up.

By Spec. Paul White

Sergeant Frank Roberts stood guard in a city where terrorists bombed his workplace and shot at the office car — with him in it. He called it good duty.

Others might call for him to have his head examined. But Roberts is simply one of many embassy Marines who found the good in what most would consider bad duty.

The Marine Corps classifies roughly half of its 139 embassy assignments as hardship duty, based on a factors such as high terrorist threat or poor economic conditions. Embassy Marines normally serve at least one of their two tours in a hardship location. Many don't mind, though. In fact, for some, it's forget the glamour of London or Paris. Give us Lima, Peru or Bujumbura, Burundi.

"Marines come to the (Marine



SSgt. Karl L. Petersen

Morning flag raising in front of the "American Embassy Quantico."

Security Guard) school because they want a challenge," said Sergeant Major Clyde Cropper, the senior enlisted man in the Marine Corps Security Battalion. "The perception is the tougher

the post, the better the Marine has to be to be a success at that post. So all Marines want the tough assignments, not par-

continued next page

"A lot of it seems to be easy to learn while you're doing it," added Lieutenant Commander Forrest A. Sherman, a Navy officer who serves as the Marine Corps Security Guard Battalion's medical expert. "It's the sheer mass and the sheer newness of what they're presented with that's tough."

Throughout this crash course, the instructors and detachment commanders evaluate each student on intangibles such as attitude, initiative, motivation and, most of all integrity, which Battalion Commander Colonel Michael Shisler describes as "doing the right thing when no one's looking."

The evaluation culminates midway through the course when a five-member screening board interviews each student to determine whether the individual will

continue in the program. Equipped with the detachment commander's recommendations and records, the board members resolve any questions they may have about a student's qualifications to become an embassy guard. The student, in turn, gets to show he or she has what it takes. After each interview, a straight vote among board members determines whether the student stays or begins checking out.

The whole process averages 24 minutes per student, perhaps the most stressful 24 minutes of the stress-laden six weeks. For a student, it's the fear of knowing that their career ambition can be derailed in less time than it takes to watch *Roseanne*. The "hot seat" nature of the inquiries doesn't ease this fear, either.

"Occasionally we might come on like a hostile district attorney in a courtroom," admitted Sherman, one of the board's members. If, for example, a student has been evaluated to have a bad attitude, the questions hammer away at this subject until the board is satisfied that the student's attitude is or isn't a problem.

Despite its intimidating nature, the process appears to be effective. Although 30 to 40 percent of those who attend the school fail to graduate, the attrition rate of embassy guards is less than four percent.

The screening board is sort of a microcosm of the school itself — short, intense and stressful. "There are a lot of good, good Marines that don't make it," Sherman noted.

That says a lot about the ones that do. ◻

DUTY

from previous page

ticularly because they want to work so hard, but because they know that in the tough assignments, you get the greatest satisfaction."

By those standards, Roberts should be a very satisfied man. He spent his first embassy guard tour in tension-racked Lima, where terrorist activity livened things up routinely. During his 15-month stint there, terrorists bombed banks and assassinated government officials. A bomb took a crater-sized bite out of the concrete wall surrounding the American Consulate. Later, a gunshot nearly took a bite out of Roberts.

"We were coming home from the embassy," Roberts said. The round struck the vehicle on the right passenger side. Everybody hit the deck." Fortunately, the bullet didn't penetrate the car.

"React drills," during which

the guards practice the procedures they would undergo in case of an emergency, are a routine exercise at most embassies. Not so in Lima. "We were doing the stuff for real," Roberts said. "We didn't need to practice."

"That's the reason I like the high-threat post. There's always the chance of something happening. It keeps you on your toes."

Conversely, in Kingston, Jamaica, Roberts' second assignment, he said the biggest on-duty threat was boredom. "The druggies acted up every now and then and wrote bad letters, but they never really did anything." Stripped of its danger and urgency, embassy guard duty becomes "plain, ordinary guard duty," said Gunnery Sergeant Mark Shelp, an instructor at the school.

"I can remember days when the phone never rang, I never had to pick up the radio and no one came in," Roberts said.

"Over an eight-hour shift, the boredom kills you sometimes."

At these low-threat posts, embassy guards must mainly be alert to crowd control situations during demonstrations against the American embassy, according to Gunnery Sergeant Robert Massie, an instructor who served as a detachment commander in Dublin, Ireland.

Under agreements with the host countries, local nationals guard the outside of the embassies, with the Marines concentrating on internal security. Many low-threat posts, such as London or Kingston, offer Marines a variety of off-duty social activities. Others, like Bujumbura, Burundi, severely test one's ability to find something to do.

When facilities are limited, or when stationed in one of the Soviet-bloc nations where movement is restricted, the Marines must look inward for entertainment. Their focus becomes their residence, the Marine Bachelor Enlisted Quarters (BEQ).

At a place like Bujumbura, the Marine BEQ can become virtually all things to members of the embassy community looking for entertainment. State Department employees socialize with the Marines there. Ambassadors have been known to drop in to join the Marines for breakfast. "People get closer over shared hardships much better than they do over wonderful things," Cropper said.

This mingling with VIPs fills Marines with a sense of pride, Roberts said. "Here, I'm just another jarhead, another Marine. But out there, I'm part of the embassy community. We're always getting invitations to dinner and parties from big shots. It opens doors that would normally be closed in the states."

So when Marines talk about pulling hardship embassy duty at some lonely outpost in an impoverished nation, save your pity. In a lot of cases, they don't mind a bit. ♦



SSgt. Karl L. Petersen



SSgt. Karl L. Petersen

When it comes to being aggressive, Marine Corps wrestlers really know how to throw down.

The TV heroes ham it up, but the Marines mean business when they say **'WE WRESTLE'**

By Specialist Paul White

Forget the World Wrestling Federation and Hulk Hogan. Never mind the National Wrestling Alliance and its "Total Package." For with all due respect to the WWF and NWA, the best wrestling program in the country goes by the letters USMC.

Marine Corps wrestlers have fashioned a dynasty within the sport, copping national and international honors faster than one can say "Hulkamania Rules." This month the team will be gunning for its sixth straight national championship.

As for team competition between the other military services, the last time the Marines lost, the "Hulkster" probably had a full head of hair. Last month, the Marines snatched their 13th consecutive Armed Forces Championship title in Greco-Roman wrestling (which, unlike freestyle, prohibits using the legs for attack or defense).

The team's winning reputation entices many wrestlers to think about becoming Marines and trying out for the team, said Staff Sergeant Greg Gibson, the head coach and an Olympic silver medalist in 1984. He added that many see the team first-hand during recruiting clinics the squad conducts

throughout the country.

The length of the wrestling season (it can run up to 11 months for those who excel in international competition) can mean individuals spending a lot of time away from their military units.

Laos-born Voadeth Thammvongsa never even made it to his first assignment. A high-school wrestling champion in Oregon, Thammvongsa capitalized on a gap in his training schedule to move from basic training straight to the Quantico, Va.-based Marine Corps wrestling tryout camp.

Instances such as this are rare, however, cautioned Captain Lewis Bumgardner, director of the Marine Corps Sports Program.

Futhermore, Marine Corps wrestlers must still pass annual weapons qualification tests and stay proficient in their job skills. "We're sticklers for that," Bumgardner said.

But for those who want to be both Marines and wrestlers, it's the chance to perform for the crown jewel of the Corps sports program. So what if they're not as famous as Hogan and the rest of his TV wrestling pals? Let's see how fast those guys can disassemble an M-16 rifle. 

Strutting their



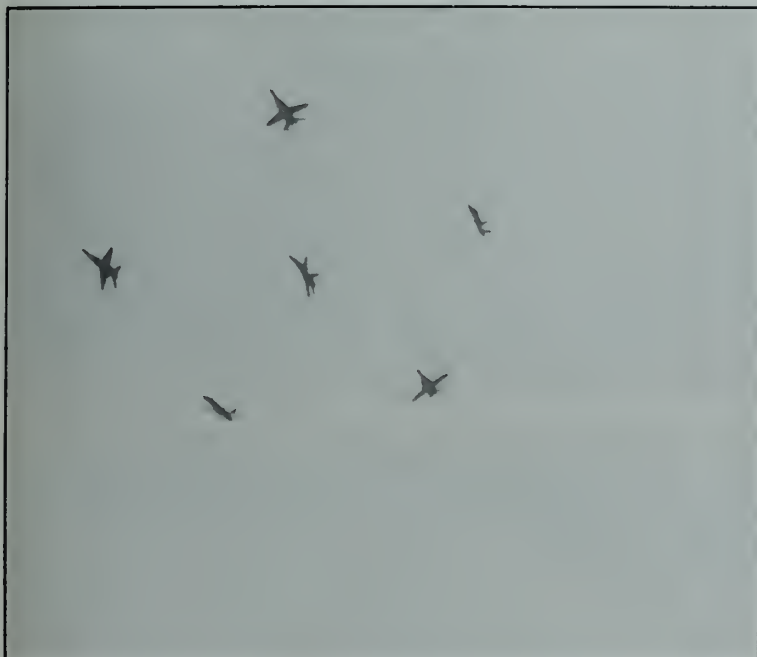
SSgt. Karl L. Petersen

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SSgt. Karl L. Petersen



The Navy and Marine Corps pilots of the Blue Angels and the Air Force pilots of the Thunderbirds have been thrilling crowds from coast to coast with their heart-stopping precision aerial acrobatics for years. These premier flight demonstration teams are on the road just about every weekend as the headliners for free airshows across the country. If you've never seen them in action, don't miss them when they come to your area. Just one show and you'll be a fan for life.

P.S. — Don't forget your earplugs!



The morning briefing.

Spec. Paul White



An obstacle to overcome.



Spec. Paul White

On the attack.



Spec. Paul White

Taking cover.



Mission complete; portrait of a Ranger.



Spec. Paul White

The Soldier's Soldier

By Specialist Paul White

Their black berets and Ranger tabs worn on their left sleeves set them apart visually. Their relentless training schedule sets them apart physically. Their performance sets them apart, period.

They are the Rangers, the celebrated, rapidly deployable light infantrymen who spearhead the Army's fighting machine. Simply put, "We are the finest infantry unit in the world," said Private 1st Class Romeo Reyes of 2nd Ranger Battalion,

Fort Lewis, Wash.

Recent events suggest Reyes' words may be more than macho bombast. In December, Ranger paratroopers conducted airborne assaults and secured areas of the countryside during this country's successful assault of Panama.

The Rangers are a quick-strike, first-strike airborne force specializing in attacking and getting out of a hostile area before the enemy can react. They infiltrate enemy regions by air, land or sea, and can operate independently or in conjunction with other special opera-

tions troops such as Marine Corps reconnaissance elements. Generally, Ranger operations are conducted during the hours of darkness.

The Rangers hone these skills by training virtually all year, breaking only for two two-week periods during which all battalion members may take leave. Additionally, Rangers have no post support duties, guard details or special duty assignments. In other words, their full-time job is to be Rangers.

Anyone can call themselves the world's best. The Rangers set out to prove it all the time. 

Shell-Stocked

Army ammunition specialists are number one with a bullet.

By Specialist Paul White

The recent combat in urban Panama City gave Fort Ord's 7th Infantry Divison (Light) the chance to show that infantrymen don't always need a jungle to get the job done.

Skilled in urban warfare tactics, the troops quickly adjusted to fighting in the 400,000-person metropolis. Yet for all their combat-in-cities skills, the assault could have been disastrous without that most basic of infantry tools — ammunition.

"Without bullets, you will die. You won't be able to deal."

Master Sergeant Sylvester Carter

That's where ammunition specialists come in. To paraphrase the popular traveler's check commercial, infantrymen don't leave home without them.

"In a combat situation, you can live without food for a couple of days," said Master Sergeant Sylvester Carter, who has been working in the ammunition field for more than 25 years. "You can live without water and gas, too. But you won't last one day without ammunition. Without bullets, you will die. You won't be able to deal."

Ammunition specialists do everything to the rounds short of firing them. They inventory each shipment upon receiving it. They also check each round for damage or rust, which could hinder its use. "If it's rusted, we may have to sand it down, re-paint it and re-stencil it so that the lettering on

At Fort Ord, the specialists are responsible for up to 50,000 tons of ammunition.

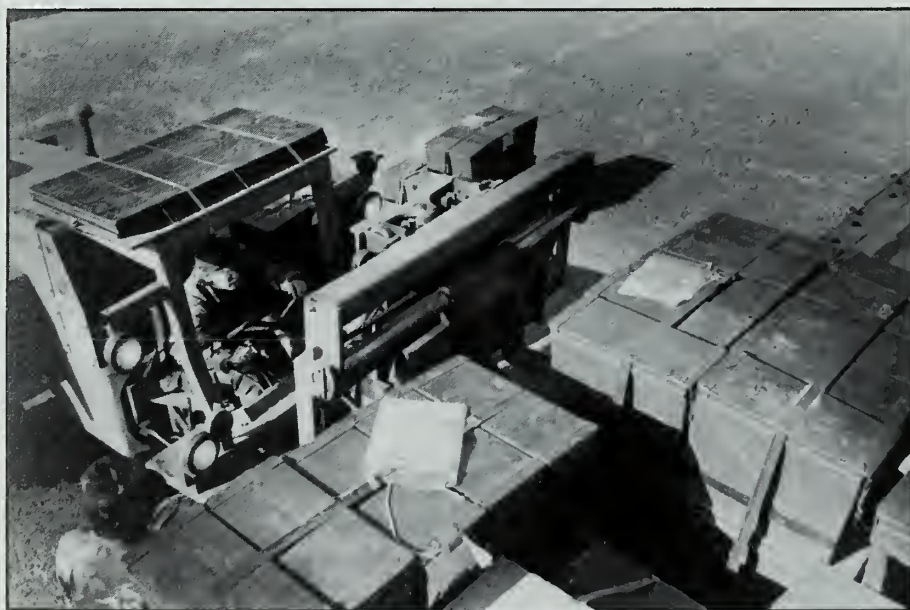
it is readable," according to Sergeant 1st Class David Strickland, another of Fort Ord's ammo specs.

The soldiers store the munitions in an ammunition supply point. From there, the rounds are distributed to the units. "Even during training exercises, ammunition plays a key role," said Sergeant Arnold Bell. "We make sure the soldiers are well provided for."

Like infantrymen, however, ammunition specialists need combat situations to explore the full impact of their jobs. Carter's experience, which dates back to the Vietnam War, began with when he supplied aircraft rockets to planes supporting infantry operations. "I'll tell you," he said, "seeing those rockets making a big flash in an enemy area, that really made my day."

"The most exciting part about being in Panama was knowing that we were actually working in our job," said Sergeant 1st Class Johnnie Brown, who was there when U.S. forces managed to flush out former Panamanian strongman Manuel Noreiga.

"It was exciting from Day One," Brown said. "We ran an ATP (ammunition transfer point). The key was to have the munitions



Spec. Paul White

Specialist Ruth Shelton carefully steers ammunition into a storage area.



Spec. Paul White

Shelton and Specialist Walter Dunn keep meticulous records of each shipment.

ready and in serviceable condition for the units to use. Twenty-four hours a day we were either on-call or on duty."

At the Fort Ord ammunition supply point, Bell estimates that the specialists are responsible for up to 50,000 tons of ammunition. "That's enough to take out Seaside," Bell said, referring to a neighboring city of roughly 37,000. Ammunition specialists are charged to insure that this, or any other type of accident, won't happen.

The risk factor when working with munitions can be significant, however. Depending on their location, ammunition specialists could work with virtually any kind of explosives, from an M-16 round to a nuclear warhead. "At some places they deal with chemical munitions," Strickland noted. "That includes nerve gas, blood and choking agents. They've got to have all kinds of safety precautions."

"You've also got to worry about compatibility," Bell added. "You wouldn't put high explosives in the same truck with white phosphorous. If the explosives went off, the wind would carry the white phosphorous all over the place. Innocent civilians would get badly burned."

Explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) personnel, the soldiers who remove and detonate defective munitions, face similar danger, Strickland added, with one major difference. "When EOD goes in, they know there's a problem and they know it's dangerous. When we go in to inventory something, we don't know there's a problem until we find it."

The danger potential hasn't deterred Fort Ord's ammo specs, though. "Just look at the Panama invasion," Bell said. "If we didn't get the ammo down there in time, the infantry couldn't have put up much of a fight."

Added Brown, "It was dangerous, but hey, I came back with all my fingers and toes." ♦

Army Ammunition Specialists

Description — Handles, stores, reconditions and salvages ammunition, explosives and components.

Helpful background skills — Mechanical aptitude, attentiveness, good close vision, normal color discrimination, manual dexterity and hand-eye coordination.

School — Eight weeks at Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

Related civilian jobs — Chemical handler, ammunition inspector, and ordnance technician.



U.S. Marine Corps photo

Eye Spy

This intelligence specialist takes a first-hand look to make sure reconnaissance Marines get smart to make their mission possible.



Spec. Paul White

Reports from reconnaissance Marine patrols provide the data Corporal Barry Brandstetter uses to prepare intelligence briefings.

At Camp Pendleton, Calif., when reconnaissance Marines need military intelligence, they turn to Corporal Barry Brandstetter. When Brandstetter is looking for a little excitement, he turns to recon Marines.

So far, the combination clicks. Whether the units need specifics on the areas they'll be patrolling or merely information on updating a security clearance, Brandstetter delivers. He, in turn, gets to learn from some of the Marine Corps' best, special operations troops who infiltrate enemy lines for information-gathering and rescue purposes. Their work is highly skilled, dangerous — and right up Brandstetter's alley.

The two-, four- or six-man teams of recon Marines train independently of other Marine Corps units, operating with only supplies, radios, night vision equipment — and more often than not, the gung-ho Brandstetter. He rarely misses an opportunity to observe their patrols. "I just love being involved with special operations," the Daytona Beach native said.

It also helps since "the more I know about their jobs, the better I can do my job," he added.

Before the units begin patrolling, Brandstetter gives intelligence briefs. Brandstetter gets information about the operation from his superiors and passes it to the teams. Since recon Marines operate in the enemy's backyard, the first thing they want to know is a natural: Where exactly is the enemy? An ill-prepared response could result in that patrol being a team's last. "You can't just say 'I don't know,'" the 20-year-old Brandstetter said. "That's how people get killed. You'd better find out."

He also alerts the teams to expected weather trends, challenge and password information in case they encounter friendly units, and evasion and escape plans in the event they make contact with the enemy.

Marine Corps

Intelligence Specialist

Description — Collects, records, evaluates and interprets information, makes detailed study of aerial photographs, conducts interrogations in foreign languages, translates written material and interprets conversations.

Helpful background skills — Geography, history, government, economics, English, foreign languages, typing, mechanical drafting and mathematics.

School — Eight weeks at the Navy/Marine Corps Intelligence Training Center, Dam Neck, Va.

Related civilian jobs — Investigator, research worker, intelligence analyst (government), map maker and records analyst.



Spec. Paul White

"The more I know about their (reconnaissance Marines) jobs, the better I can do my job."

Corporal Barry Brandstetter

When the teams return, Brandstetter conducts a debrief by collecting all the information, sketches and photos accumulated during the patrol. He then compiles the data into a report and submits it to intelligence headquarters, where it is analyzed.

Although these duties appeal to Brandstetter now, when he first came to the unit it appeared as though the intelligence specialist had outsmarted himself. Before joining the Corps, Brandstetter chose intelligence based on what he assumed he'd be doing, studying and collecting information on various countries. And for awhile, he was doing just that. "I was assigned to a team where we concentrated on Iran," he said. "We might get a message from higher headquarters that they've got so many ships out in the (Persian) Gulf. Or maybe we'd hear about troop movement into the southern area of the country. We'd just kind of keep up on the situation. It was interesting."

What he failed to realize, however, was that as in most military jobs, specific duties hinge on the location of the assignment and its particular mission. So with re-assignment came new responsibilities, and a sad farewell to country studies.

Fortunately, "I like this even better," Brandstetter said of his work with the recon Marines. He likes it so much he plans to attend the eight-week course which would officially qualify him in recon Marine duties.

That would bring him full circle: from studying the countries others patrol to patrolling the countries others study. ◊

Ship to Shore

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Amie Richardson

Five, four, three, two, one — Action!”

“Good evening, and welcome to *News Watch*. Our top story: The Navy will soon be feeling the financial effects of recent DOD budget cuts.”

No, it's not the *CBS Evening News with Dan Rather*. It's Petty

Officer 2nd Class Kenneth Durbin, a Navy journalist, broadcasting the news to a crew of 5,000 sailors and Marines in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

Navy journalists aboard ship are unique among the military's media members. Unlike journalists in the other services, those in the Navy work in every area of their field.

“I became a journalist to write,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class David

Smith, Durbin's co-worker and one of the five journalists assigned to the carrier USS America. “I figured I'd be working for some newspaper as a staff writer.” Nine years later, although Smith still puts in time on the ship's six-page, seven-day-a-week newspaper, “now I like the broadcasting aspect of the job.”

Often working 18 to 20 hours per day while at sea, journalists are solely responsible for keeping the crew informed and entertained through the Shipboard Information, Training and Entertainment (SITE) system.

Using stories pulled from the ship's wire service teletype machines, Smith anchors news reports at noon and 6 p.m. “For the ship's (local) news, we go out and shoot what happens that day, and I'll come back and edit it into the newscast.

News broadcasts are among the most commonly produced shows aboard the America, but according to Durbin, news is only one of many shows he and his co-workers produce.

Journalists also assist in various ceremonies, such as commissioning, changes of command or homecoming celebrations. They run radio programs and serve as disc



JO2 Amie Richardson

“Three...two...one...action!”

A Lucky Break

By Petty Officer 3rd Class Teresa Harbuck

A broken ankle turned out to be a two-fold blessing in disguise for Petty Officer 3rd Class Frank W. Showalter.

When it came time to transfer from the USS Sacramento, homeported in Bremerton, Wash., the 27-year-old Navy journalist had hopes of staying out west and being assigned to the staff of a military publication.

Just a week after he had discussed the future move with the journalist assignment detailer, he went out to play baseball, tripped over the third baseman in

an attempt to slide and ended up with a cast on his foot for three months.

Since Showalter would be on limited duty while waiting for his ankle to heal, he automatically received a new set of orders.

“I was very fortunate,” said Showalter. “Not only did I get to stay in Washington, a state which I've come to love, but I was finally given the opportunity to write for a military newspaper.”

Stationed at Naval Submarine Base Bangor, Wash., Showalter is the assistant editor for the “Trident



JO2 Amie Richardson

Petty Officer 3rd Class Kenneth Durbin at the helm of the USS America's "Super SITE" system.

jockeys. They are also responsible for sending out press releases and working with media.

Despite these projects, television duties can still dominate a Navy journalist's time aboard ship, Smith said. The America's SITE system, dubbed "Super SITE," is one of the Navy's largest. It features four VCRs and three cameras and keeps three channels running 24 hours a day. Two journalists man the system at a time, working 12-hour shifts.

On Channel 4, sailors can watch *Roseanne*, *Oprah*, *thirtysomething* and other top-rated programs, along with news and sports. Channel 7 shows *Batman*, *Lethal Weapon II* and other movies from a library featuring more than 500 titles. Channel 13 runs training films as well as more movies.

For those who miss their MTV, the ship offers *Music American Style*, a weekly music show featuring all the crew's favorite videos, said Smith, who hosts the program.

Between the videos, movies and TV shows, the journalists pass information important to the crew. "We try to make people think that we're entertaining them without letting them know that the whole purpose of us being there is to keep them informed," Smith said. "It's a tease, but it works."

The extra responsibilities of being a Navy journalist require extra schooling. After the basic journalism course (see journalist box), those who pass a voice audition may continue their training through a broadcasting course.

Those who complete the broadcasting course usually serve their

Navy Journalists

Description — reports, edits, proofreads news; publishes information about service people and activities through newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

Helpful background skills — high degree of clerical aptitude. English, journalism, typing and writing experience helpful.

School — sixteen weeks at the Defense Information School Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind.

Related civilian jobs — news editor, copyreader, script writer, reporter, photojournalist, rewrite or art layout person, radio and TV announcer, or production manager.

first assignment at an overseas broadcasting detachment. Most other students receive orders to ships. But whether they're assigned to a shore-based newspaper, an aircraft carrier or an overseas broadcasting detachment, Navy journalists' vast opportunity to use their talent and imagination in the field gives them the chance to earn the recognition of thousands of people. "I get pleasure out of people letting me know they enjoy what I've done," Smith said.

Talk all you want, Mr. Rather. Navy journalists are doing it all, behind the camera as well as in front of it. ◻

Tides," the base's weekly newspaper.

"After serving as an independent duty journalist (the only journalist assigned) aboard the ship, this was my first opportunity to work on a newspaper," said Showalter. "I actually get to write real, live articles about people in the Navy and events that occur on the base."

As a print journalist, Showalter not only writes stories but also takes photographs and assists with the layout of the newspaper.

"It makes me feel good when I create a front page and it actually turns out as good as I'd hoped," said Showalter. "And it's even a better feeling when someone in the office or on the base comes up to me and says, 'Hey, you did a good job on your story in

the paper'."

Though his tour aboard the Sacramento may have slowed him down a bit as a print journalist, he seems to be making up for lost time at the "Trident Tides."

"I admit that I had no idea what was involved in putting out a newspaper, but just after I joined the staff, I attended the Editors Course at DINFOS, where I learned so much more about layout and design," said Showalter. "The course introduced me to new ideas and concepts, which have now been incorporated into our base newspaper, and we still have more changes on the way."

Undoubtedly, Showalter is excited about his job and reaffirms that even though the broken ankle was a misfortune, in the end it brought him good luck. ◻

Raze it, Save it or Pave it

By Staff Sergeant Linda L. Mitchell

You need an old dormitory demolished to make way for new construction? You've got it. Need an entire baseball diamond — fence, backstop, dugouts and all — moved to a new location? No problem. How about constructing a new five-mile jogging track? Piece of cake.

"The best part about this job is that we see the

results of our work immediately. We know we've accomplished what initially may have seemed like an impossible task.

"Plus, our efforts affect everyone — the pilots flying the planes, the joggers using the new track, and the secretaries who now walk on a sidewalk instead of in mud and wet grass."

That's how Staff Sergeant Lynette Cox, a pavements maintenance specialist in the 62nd Civil Engineering Squadron (CES), McChord Air Force Base, Wash., sums up her job.

"The runways are our main repair priority, because temperature changes and damp ground do a lot of damage. We fill potholes and cracks, and sometimes assist civilian contractors with repaving the runways, each of which are several thousand feet long," she explained.

They also maintain all base roads and sidewalks, erect security fences and perform snow removal operations.

Pavements people operate certain pieces of equipment, including ton-and-a-half dump trucks, loaders, and rollers, but sometimes they rely on "the big guns", like tractor trailers, road graders, cranes and tractors, to get the job done.

Sergeant Raymond E. Walker, a heavy equipment operator in 62nd CES, explained, "If pavements people are resurfacing a parking lot, we deliver a bulldozer to the site on the tractor trailer. The bulldozer lays the base, and pavements maintenance specialists can then spread the asphalt."

Pavements maintenance and heavy equipment specialists must possess quick reflexes and the eyes of a mother (you know — the ability to know where you are and what you're doing, even if she can't actually see you). "Some of our forklifts and cranes are 14 feet tall," Walker said. "We have an excavator with a boom that's more than 40 feet high. We must know where every overhead powerline is and be aware of low tree limbs and other hazards."

Danger lurks underground in the form of telephone cables, water mains, and pipelines for transferring JP-4 jet fuel from storage tanks to the flightline.

To be aware of these potential problems, pavements maintenance and heavy equipment people check blueprints of the area in which they'll be



SSgt. Linda L. Mitchell

Pavements maintenance and heavy equipment specialists demolish an old dormitory.

working before the base engineers in the Planning Shop okay the project. A solid knowledge in blueprint reading is a must in these career fields.

Basic jobs skills are learned at either of the two training schools — Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, for pavements maintenance specialists; and Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., for heavy equipment specialists.

The common factor which both schools emphasize is safety, which doesn't begin or end with knowing how to use the equipment. It begins with donning all proper safety equipment, including goggles, gloves and steel-toed boots. It continues with performing walk-around inspections before taking the machine out of the compound, making sure no one is sitting or standing too close to the machine and that other hazards are removed.

"First we ensure that newly graduated trainees know how to check the vehicle," Cox said. "Then we give them some driving time in the yard before sending them out on a job. They must be able to maneuver the steam roller accurately and safely, before we can teach them how to lay asphalt."

Cox entered this career field for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was that she likes working outdoors. Plus, she wanted experience working with the various pieces of equipment, something she wasn't allowed to do as a civilian. "They made me be a flag person directing traffic, which is the lowest paying job on a construction crew, and wouldn't let me move up to something else," she said.

Walker said that his experience was being stuck driving a dump truck for a few years.

"One great thing about this career field is the experience we receive operating all of the equipment," he said. "Unlike most civilian jobs, we usually start new people on the dump trucks, but in about six months,

Air Force

Pavements Maintenance Specialist

Description — operates small construction equipment, including dump trucks/snow plows, post hole diggers, steam rollers and small graders.

School — six weeks at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas.

Heavy Equipment Operator

Description — operates heavy construction equipment, including tractor trailers/flatbed trailers, large cranes, excavators and bulldozers.

School — Twelve weeks at the U.S. Army school at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

Helpful background education — civilian building or road construction experience, blue print reading.

Related civilian jobs — construction worker/site foreman or supervisor.

they can switch to something else, train on that for a few months, and then move on to another piece of equipment. This job is definitely not stationary."

Want a job that keeps you outdoors, teaches you construction skills, lets you advance in the job and makes you feel like you can accomplish the impossible? You've got it — if you become a pavements maintenance or heavy equipment specialist. ◻



SSgt. Linda L. Mitchell

Who ya gonna call?

POLLUTIONBUSTERS



J03 Evelyn F. Almodovar

Petty Officer 3rd Class Christopher Judy takes a sample from a pier-trapped oil slick.

By Petty Officer 3rd Class Evelyn F. Almodovar

The phone rings. A man in a U.S. Coast Guard uniform hurries to pick up the receiver. "Six hundred gallons of oil have been spilled at Waterside, and no one can determine the source," says the caller from the Norfolk Shipbuilding Company.

Still holding the receiver, Chief Petty Officer Ted Lewis of the Hampton Roads Coast Guard Marine Safety Office relays the details of the call to his five-man team. Immediately, it prepares to collect evidence and supervise the clean-up effort.

Waterside Harbor is an important tourist attraction in Norfolk, Va. Six hundred gallons of oil in its waters requires a quick response.

Lewis hangs up the receiver. The investigation is about to begin. His team gathers oil sample bottles, oil absorbing pads, and statement forms used to document the stories of potential witnesses. Cameras are ready to photograph the damage, and within 15 minutes of the call, Lewis and his crew are at the site.

"It's not that bad," Lewis says, assessing the rainbow oil sheen in the water. "The oil has collected at the pier." But, "Who did it?" is the question his team's asking.

Binoculars verify the names of vessels near the site, and water samples are taken. The chief's team then boards the ships in the area and questions crews about the incident. It also inspects the ships' equipment for oil leaks, and takes samples of each vessel's oil. These samples are sent to the Central Oil Identification Laboratory in Groton, Conn. After they're analyzed, these samples become "oil fingerprints" to be used as evidence in court.

A 16-year Coast Guard veteran, Lewis is a marine science technician (MST). Lewis' assistants, two machine technicians and three MSTs, are all pollution investigators. Their job is to collect evidence against polluters. If found guilty, licenses can be suspended or revoked, and up to \$5,000 fines can be imposed.

It's more than just a gratifying job for Lewis. "There is self-satisfaction in knowing that I'm having an impact on the environment by keeping the waters

as clean as I can, and that my job may lead to improved pollution regulations."

The pollution investigators move quickly to set up the clean-up effort. The Coast Guard's Pollution Revolving Fund Office is contacted and authorizes \$10,000 for the clean-up. An independent contractor in Norfolk begins the clean-up using vacuum trucks with suction heads that suck up oil and water. Had it been a bigger spill, a floating containment ring would have been used to keep the oil from spreading.

At Waterside, all the statements taken indicate no one knows what happened. No witnesses have been found. The laboratory results of the samples taken from the spill, and the ones taken from the ships' oil don't match. The only plausible explanation is that a vessel dumped the oil during the night and escaped before it was spotted.

It's a new day. The phone rings and the chief and his team gear up again. That call may tell of another spill. Will it be another incident like Waterside? All Lewis knows is that his team will live up to the Coast Guard motto: "Always Prepared." ◻

Coast Guard

Marine Science Technician

Description — Ensures marine environmental response and port safety; analyzes meteorological and oceanographic data.

Helpful background skills — Ability to use numbers in practical problems. Algebra, geometry, and chemistry.

School — Six-week course in Yorktown, Va.

Related civilian jobs — Oceanographic technician, weather observer, and meteorologist.

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